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ABSTRACT

Language is a child's major tool for learning about the world. This book presents a naturalistic case study of one child's use of language from two-and-a-half to five years, drawing on systemic functional theory to argue that cognitive development is essentially a linguistic process and offering a new description and interpretation of linguistic and cognitive developments during this period. The book's case study examines the child's changing language in terms of its role in interpreting four key domains of experience--the world of things, the world of events, the world of semiosis (including the inner world of cognition), and the construal of cause and effect. It shows how new linguistic possibilities constitute developments in cognitive resources and prepare the child for later learning in school. The book extends M.A.K. Halliday's theory of language development from the earlier studies of protolanguage and initial grammar and should be of interest to researchers across a range of disciplines, including systemic functional theory, child language, developmental psychology, and educational linguistics. Contains many tables and approximately 400 references. (NKA)

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